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Faulty Memoir?

In the interval between the defeat for the Presidency and his current campaign for Governor of California, Richard M. Nixon wrote a book on "Six Crises" in his career (the Hiss case, the "Nixon fund" furor in the 1952 campaign, President Eisenhower's heart attack, the South American trip in 1958, the "kitchen debate" with Premier Khrushchev, the 1960 campaign). Writing the book, Mr. Nixon says in the introduction, "turned out to be the seventh major crisis of my life."

"Six Crises" is now on sale, and last week Mr. Nixon found himself in controversy over part of his account of the 1960 campaign. His account charges Mr. Kennedy with "endangering the security" of the planned operation against Cuba. Mr. Nixon declares that Senator Kennedy made his campaign stand for tougher action against the Castro regime knowing—from intelligence briefings provided by the Eisenhower Administration—that the U. S. was already secretly training Cuban exiles for an invasion of Cuba. Since this was a policy Mr. Nixon had favored but could not reveal, "Kennedy had me at a terrible disadvantage."

Mr. Nixon writes that in this situation "there was only one thing I could do," and that was "go to the other extreme." Thus in the fourth and last Kennedy-Nixon television debate Mr. Nixon called the Senator's recommendations "dangerously irresponsible."

There was a prompt rebuttal from the Administration. A White House statement declared that "Senator Kennedy was not told" before the election about preparations for an invasion of Cuba. That was substantiated by Allen W. Dulles, who as head of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1960 provided the briefings. He said he thought Mr. Nixon had been under "an honest misunderstanding."

Mr. Nixon rejoined that he had checked with former President Eisenhower and found "he had given instructions that . . . Senator Kennedy was to be as fully briefed . . . as I." The White House declined further comment, and with that the incident appeared to be closed.